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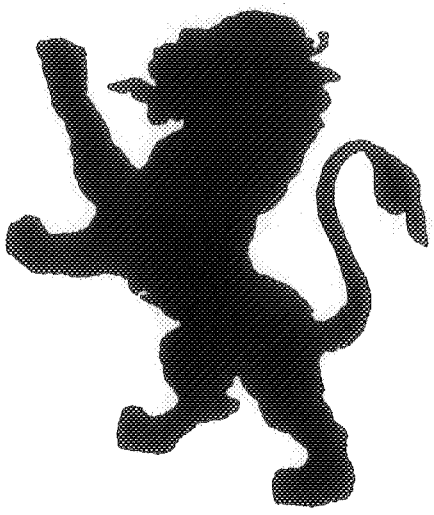

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Robert Crawford, ed. *The Scottish Invention of English Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1998. xii + 259 pp. ISBN 0-521-59038-8.

My father told me that some books take longer than a day to read. *The Scottish Invention of English Literature* is definitely a two-day book, extending the scope of Crawford's groundbreaking *Devolving English Literature* (1992) and of his edited volume *Launch-site for English Studies: Three Centuries of Literary Teaching at the University of St Andrews* (1997). The central premise here is that Scottish academics (working with local communities in the university towns of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and St Andrew) were central to the creation of the present-day university discipline of English literature.

Closely argued and carefully referenced, the book discerns an evolutionary process, starting with the study of Rhetoric, moving focus onto Belles Lettres (and the related rise of the novel) and culminating in full-blown Criticism in its modern sense. Major players are identified, starting with Francis Hutcheson, and continuing with Adam Smith, Hugh Blair, William Greenfield and their intellectual descendants within Scotland, North America, Australia and New Zealand. Chapters are interrelated in a way that collections of essays rarely achieve. In this respect the structure brought to mind the incremental repetition technique associated with the ballad: ideas are overtly repeated and enhanced in consecutive pieces, with referencing back and forward. The seamless links show Crawford's commendable skills as an editor, and invest *The Scottish Invention of English Literature* with a unified tone of authority.

There are highly serviceable accounts like Neil Rhodes' study of the academic shift within Scotland, "From Rhetoric to Criticism." Rhodes examines the development of literary studies, beginning with sixteenth-century rhetoric and, in particular, the work of Pierre de la Ramée (Ramus) and its translation by the St Andrews scholar Roland MacIlmaine as *The Logike of the Most Excellent Philosopher P. Ramus, Martyr*. Outlining the development of belleletrism in France, Rhodes then emphasizes the role of Edinburgh University in the move toward criticism, considering the influence of John Stevenson (appointed Professor of Logic and Metaphysics in 1730), Adam, Smith, Henry Home (Lord Kames) and Hugh Blair, appointed to the first Chair of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres at the University of Edinburgh in 1762. Equally, Rhodes makes a strong case for St Andrews having played a vital role in this process, underlining the contribution of MacIlmaine and Robert Watson (Professor of Logic, Rhetoric and Metaphysics at St Andrews). Watson opened a lecture of 1758 by defining the "Rules of Rhetorick" as mere "Observations concerning the Particulars which render Discourse excellent & usefull....in the form of general Criticisms illustrated by Examples from Authors. To what follows then you may give the Name of Rhetorick or Criticism as you please." Rhodes' heavyweight piece is crucial reading for the more cerebral accounts that follow.

Ian Duncan's treatment of "Adam Smith, Samuel Johnson and the Institutions of English" provides a thoughtful balance to the somber opening pieces by Crawford and Rhodes. Duncan looks at the formation of national identity within and outwith the academy. Pointing out that "nation-building was very much the business of the Scottish universities," Duncan indicates the paradoxical ways in which metropolitan identity was created by those considered to be provincial. He draws attention to Smith's construction of the "literary schizophrenia deplored by modern nationalist critics" and, perhaps more crucially, in formulating "an argument that insists on the cultural and performative status of national identity, as a condition not fixed by birth but made, learnt and practiced—in short, as a competence." Duncan is slightly less convincing on Johnson's contribution to this trend, and verging on the tenuous in considering the Waverley novels as expressions of a Smithian zeitgeist. This essay, however, is one of the most stimulating in the collection.

In terms of its lucidity, and because of its general usefulness, probably the best piece is Fiona Stafford's consideration of "Hugh Blair's Ossian, Romanticism and the Teaching of Literature." In a style which is as elegant as Blair's, Stafford explores Blair's "rhetorical strategy" and its influence on intellectual life in eighteenth-century Scotland and beyond; perhaps alarmingly, she notes that "as late as 1911 an abridged version served as a textbook for an American writing course." Reviewing the philosophical origins of Blair's thought, Stafford shows his reasoned partiality for oral forms of expression. Viewed in this context, Macpherson's Ossianic verse epitomizes the best in rhetorical communication:

> Ossian combined the strong feelings of early man with the beneficial discipline of the oral bardic tradition, through which only the most powerful compositions could survive, and thus represented a model not only for critical analysis, but also for personal emulation.

Stafford is aware, of course, of the ironies in admiring oral writing in written translations, and of Blair's awareness of the transitory nature of oral transmission as a major shortcoming. She points out, too, the personal irony of Blair's orally-delivered *Lectures* becoming hugely influential in the form of a textbook. She traces its influence on writers including Blake, Coleridge and (to a certain extent) on Wordsworth, suggesting that the malleability of his words were their strength; the Romantics could "take what they wanted from published material and make it their own." Stafford's piece, in the way it suggests additional directions for tracing Scottish influence on literature generally, suggests practical applications for the lessons of Scottish Literature and English Studies.

Other notable contributions include Rajit S. Dosanjh's "The Eloquence of the Bar: Hugh Blair's *Lectures*, Professionalism and Scottish Legal Education." This treats the developing role of belles lettres in ensuring the exclusive

nature of the legal profession. Paul Bator considers "The Entrance of the novel into the Scottish universities": by using lecture notes, library circulation records, and literary society activities, Bator demonstrates "how quickly the novel was taken into the mainstream system of university education in Scotland." Martin Moonie celebrates a scandalously forgotten figure in "William Greenfield: Gender and the Transmission of Literary Culture," and Joan H. Pittock in "An Evolutionary Microcosm: The Teaching of Literature and Aesthetics at Aberdeen" convincingly shows the importance of this (allegedly) peripheral university in the founding of English as a mainstream academic discipline. The precise contribution of Scottish academics' traditions to the development of American literary teaching is considered in Franklin E. Court's "The Early Impact of Scottish Literary Teaching in North America" and in Andrew Hook's "Scottish Academia and the Invention of American Studies." Linda Ferreira-Buckley provides an account of "Scottish Rhetoric and the formation of Literary Studies in Nineteenth-Century England" and Chris Worth discusses "'A Centre at the Edge'": Scotland and the Early Teaching of Literature in Australia and New Zealand." Crawford rounds off the collection as neatly as he began it, with a chapter summarizing the case for the formative and continuing roles played by Scots in the relationship between "Scottish Literature and English Studies" in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, highlighting the paradoxical process by which "Anglocentric propriety" was emphasized in a sustained way within the Scottish context. Crawford takes the argument right up to the present, making reference to the work of the late Alexander Scott at the University of Glasgow as well as that of himself and Douglas Dunn at St Andrews.

The Scottish Invention of English Literature is both intellectually well-considered and provocative. It can be seen, on one level, as part of a general academic movement towards historicizing Scotland in fresh ways; its heavy theoretical basis, too, is symptomatic of a much-needed trend in current Scottish literary criticism. St Andrews' centrality is, perhaps, over-stated and there could be accusations of parochialism: France is mainly significant in its influence on Scots like Rollin; London is significant mainly as a home for the exiled Greenfield. Neither are the links between academia and the outside world always convincing; I did find myself a little skeptical regarding the notion of the centrality of academia. However, the pride in Scottish analytical achievements is justifiable. The book's major achievement is in establishing a Scottish line of critical descent in the development of literature as an academic discipline. For this reason, and for its graceful form and style (a tribute to Scottish literary traditions), this should be essential reading for every literary scholar.

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